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Latin America Report

(FOUO 6/80)

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EL SALVADOR

'PRELA' INTERVIEWS PRS-ERP LEADER VILLALOBOS

Salvadoran Revolutionary Interviewed

PA110248 Havana PRELA in Spanish 1810 GMT 7 Mar 80 PA

[Report on the "Main portions" of interview with Joaquin Villalobos, top political and military leader of the Salvadoran Revolutionary Peoples Army, conducted by PRELA correspondent Mario Menendez Rodriguez, dated 6 March-- "Somewhere in El Salvador"]

[Text] A most uncommon but most efficient and extraordinary school--the school of errors--where professors and students, the protagonists of painful and heartrending mistakes, reflect on the confusion and unrest that their political conduct has caused among a people immersed in a revolutionary process. This is a singular school in which the mistakes committed with regard to the populace are not only admitted, but are corrected in the crucible of the people's struggle until the correct way is chosen again thereby permitting a secure and firm advance. A school of this type in this country at war has an indisputable presence and a well-known name--The Revolutionary People's Army, (ERP). The most advanced ERP militants, in conjunction with important and influential sectors of the dispossessed majority which wanted unity of action among all revolutionary and democratic organizations, have created the Salvadoran Revolutionary Party (PRS), which has the solid political and military strength of the masses.

The synthesis of this specific experience also has a name: Joaquin Villalobos, the "Rene Cruz" of the underground, the secretary general of the PRS and at the same time, top leader of the ERP.

For several hours, PRENSA LATINA met with the young leader, 28, who abandoned his economic studies to work full time as a revolutionary. The meeting was held in the home of a typical Salvadoran working class family, a fitting framework for the sincerity and unaffectedness, the flexibility and spirit of unity as well as the determination which today characterizes the members of the PRS-ERP.

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On Militarism and Its Consequences

However, before informing the readers of the main portions of the interview with Joaquin Villalobos, it is worthwhile to note that the complex process of development begun by the ERP in 1971--which evolved through acute conflicts--entered a qualitatively superior phase at the first congress of the PRS in 1977, when the doors were closed to pragmatism, short-sightedness, individual ambition for power and control, and militarism with all its tragic consequences. All of these characteristics had for several years determined the actions of the ERP and blocked the initial phase of the PRS.

Consider the following: The belief in a short-term victory generated the concepts and military solution to any type of activity or problem and reflected a great underestimation--one could say scorn--for the revolutionary movement of the Salvadoran masses, which was committed to different methods, forms and means of struggle.

Militarism, for its part, isolated the ERP not only from the people, but also from the very development of the political process in El Salvador. This was so because the ERP, expecting a prompt resolution to class conflicts while dedicating its time to preparation of the instruments of war, was prevented from acting and influencing the conjunction of forces that were operating in the critical phases of the social movement.

Moreover, the hegemonic ambitions demonstrated by the then top chief, Sebastian Urquilla, prevented discussion and internal democracy, encouraged sectarianism and factionalism within the ERP--"Divide and Conquer"--and gave free rein to adventurism, whose most eloquent expression was Carlos Humberto Portillo (Mario Vladimir Rogel) and summary executions as a way to resolve political disagreements. As a result of this, prestigious members of the ERP were killed, including the poet Roque Dalton Garcia.

As a logical consequence of the above, schisms occurred which tore the ERP even wider apart. The most important split was that of the sectors which later formed what is today, translated into practice, a prominent and influential political-military organization: the national resistance.

To rediscover the thread of a policy of principles was not, therefore, an easy task. However, the revolution is a joint problem and the very objective reality of the Salvadoran revolutionary process demanded urgent changes.

Therefore, when the instrument of criticism and self-criticism began to be used by the most advanced militants--precisely by those who had demonstrated their heroism in various military operations and who on the basis of the results of these actions realized the need for a link with the movement of the masses and for unity with the other revolutionary and democratic organizations--the path was opened to collective discussion and thus began the destruction of the military structure and the vertical nature of the organization.

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In the process of rectification, a special place is occupied by Rafael Antonio Arce Zablah, "Amilcar," who fell on 26 September 1975, during the retreat following the military occupation of Villa del Carmen, in the eastern La Union Department.

Encounter With the Present

"It has been a very difficult, bitter path. Recovery has demanded a great sacrifice, but the results are now in sight," adds Octavio Ponce, member of the political commission of the PRS and of the general staff of the ERP, as he was leading me to some site in the country where Joaquin Villalobos could be found.

"We have matured and improved discipline in the course of these years...today we are certain of the mechanisms which, without undermining the dynamism of the ideological struggle--the engine which moves us toward the proper positions--insure the unity of the party..." adds the leader who 9 years ago was among the founders of the ERP.

And what is that unity understood to mean, he was asked.

Octavio answered: "By that unity we mean the confidence of all the cadres and the bases of the party in democratic centralism, which corrects any possible deviation...."

The security measures of the PRS-ERP are similar to those which are applied by the Farabundo Marti Popular Liberation forces and other Salvadoran political-military forces...their main pillars are the people themselves, among whom the revolutionary militants move "like fish in water."

Joaquin Villalobos had chosen the home of a working class family to spend the night....

"Just as we struggle and work with them, we also live with them," says the "Rene Cruz" of the underground on introducing PRENSA LATINA to his hosts, who received us amiably, with confidence that the truth will be made public everywhere.

Things are prepared for the interview and the fighters of hope sit down to listen to their top leader....

[Question] What are the PRS and the ERP?

[Answer] From the party viewpoint, we could respond in a conceptual manner: They are the group of political cadres that permit us to prepare for the task of leading the struggle of the masses for their political and military claims. Inside the organization, they help us to establish the forms and methods that stimulate the political, tactical and strategic capacity of

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the cadres, who are governed by democratic centralism...as far as the army is concerned, they are perhaps the seed which generated the party and today's peoples army...however, the most important thing is that both the party and the army consider them to be a part of the whole--the advanced political detachment--in other words, a part of the vanguard of the Salvadoran revolution...."

[Question] Why were they created?

[Answer] "It will be necessary to look, although briefly, at the history of the PRS and the ERP, instruments of struggle which are different, but which have many points of convergence...the ERP emerged around 1971 as part of a tidal wave...of effervescence and of revolutionary concerns that were being manifested within the political organizations that existed in the country at the time.... Basically, it emerged because of the need to create and organize the armed apparatus that would permit the establishment of new forms of struggle within the Salvadoran revolutionary process.... It was an initial answer, a shortsighted one at the time...it had a disorderly structure, made up of many groups with different views of strategy, groups which were essentially united by the desire to promote armed struggle in El Salvador.... Later all this was purified and it was channeled into a process in which the guerrilla cadres reflected, mature and evaluated their experience and acquired a political vision which demanded a link with the masses and a structure that would permit adequate political management.... In this manner, a greater application of experience made it necessary to enter upon the path of establishing a party.... It is in this risky process, with many difficulties--internal divisions, schisms--that the party was formed...there are serious discussions...it is 1975. The process culminates 2 years later, in 1977, when the first congress is held and the main strategic changes are made, one of the most prominent of which is the eradication of militarism within the organization. The army comes under its political direction and modifies its structure...it was realized that, although the upright [verticalismo] influence was still being felt, the Salvadoran revolutionary process and its leadership were basically political...the most important thing, therefore, was to establish mechanisms to adequately channel political and military problems. Hence the party and the army become historical necessities...."

[Question] What is the PRS-ERP strategy?

[Answer] "Our strategy is that of people's revolutionary warfare. The basic strategic enemy is imperialism, in alliance with the national oligarchy and the most reactionary sectors of the army. Within this framework, we consider the process of formation of the ERP to be a part of the process of formation of the revolutionary strategic forces which will make it possible to defeat the enemies of the Salvadoran people. However, although the strategy of the PRS-ERP is people's revolutionary warfare, it cannot be forgotten that we came upon the Salvadoran scene at a time when there was also

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an eruption of a profound crisis in the economic and political structure of Central America, which made it possible to see that the revolutionary forces generated during this period of crisis would necessarily have to assume basic historical commitments in the framework of a real policy of power in view of the weakening of imperialism, the oligarchy and the puppet governments in the Central American region.... In this sense, in the phase in which the people's revolutionary warfare is unleashed, the PRS-ERP presented as a fundamental thesis the application of the policy of insurrection, a policy that was perhaps expressed without all the theoretic and political bases that have been necessary since 1975, but a policy which was basically appropriate...the critical process generated within the governments at the service of the oligarchy and the rate of attrition on those governments by the revolutionary organizations, as well as the deterioration of imperialism at the international level, have created the conditions required to go from a process of guerrilla warfare and the establishment of a strategic army to a basic phase of the struggle for power; the phase of accelerated insurrection, which we foresee as short or medium term."

The Basic Problems

[Question] What are the immediate and the medium-term objectives of the PRS-ERP?

[Answer] "What to other revolutionary movements would be long-term objectives become short or medium-term objectives within the Salvadoran revolutionary process. With regard to the short term objectives, we consider it to be of vital importance to resolve problems related to the unity of all the leftist forces.... Since it has been politically proven that at this time the possibility of attaining power has been opened not only to the Salvadoran revolution but to revolutions throughout Central America, it is also being proved that this possibility is open to the group of anti-imperialist forces in Latin America. All this is being demonstrated within the concrete reality of all the conflicts presented by the Salvadoran panorama. To fail to go on to the process of unification of the left that would give the Latin American revolution a new victory would be, in our opinion, a betrayal of the interests of continental revolution. Regarding the medium-term objectives, we believe that they are the same to all the forces which make up the vanguard of the Salvadoran revolution. They are the objectives of conquering power and establishing a government of popular democracy that will lead to socialism or to a government defined however the revolutionary forces, in conjunction with the most advanced democratic sectors, may agree to define it."

[Question] Within what framework does the PRS-ERP see the struggle of the Salvadoran people?

[Answer] "The crisis being experienced by Salvadoran society cannot be viewed separate from that which is affecting Central America because

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El Salvador is part of the economic structure of the area..the main economic and political problems there are related in such a way that--we can affirm--the existence or change in one of them in any of the countries of the region affects the existence or change of one or the other problem in several or all of the other Central American nations.... Central America must be seen as a dialectic unity of opponents, the opponents being the Central American countries...the crisis exists in Central America as a whole and in each nation as something specific...therefore, this crisis has a double nature, to put it that way.... Certain intervals, joint actions and social explosions are to be expected during the development of economic and political crisis in Central America: Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala.... In addition, the same identity that becomes evident in the problems, also becomes evident between the people and their revolutionary vanguards which view the revolution in its double nature: the specific--the Salvadoran, in our case--and the general, the Central American.... Moreover, the present crisis of the economic and political structures of Central America is occurring at a time when imperialism, in our judgment, is on the defensive... this establishes guidelines for the Central American process to become a victory for the Latin American revolution and transform itself into a liberating process viewed not only through the prism of geography but through the political prism of the other revolutionary vanguards of Latin America...."

The People's Political Offensive

[Question] What is the purpose of occupying cities, towns, cantons, villages, farms and factories?

[Answer] "Although each political-military organization views the occupation within its own tactical goals, the main thing is to analyze the meaning of these occupations for the process of the Salvadoran revolution.... The occupations are being carried out within the framework of an offensive by the masses and within a policy which no longer accepts the rules of the game established by the oligarchy and the military regimes and the formulas suggested by imperialism, such as the present government junta.... These occupations respond to the struggle of the masses for better salaries, social benefits and political demands: such as the whereabouts of missing persons, the denunciation of tortures and the release of political prisoners.... In its most advanced stage, the military occupation carried out by the revolutionary organizations create the conditions for an upward process in the insurrectional struggle...."

However, violence has increased, dozens of persons are killed for peacefully occupying the Latifundia of 14 families.

[Question] Why does the PRS-ERP insist on these methods?

[Answer] "The tactical objectives of an occupation may be aimed at achieving the specific conquest of certain victories, but the important thing is

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that they express a political situation, a degree of tension that increases day by day...we are seeking out goals through offensive methods, ways and means which, if stopped, could result in the retreat of the masses, their retreat to the defensive.... This does not mean that a waiting policy should be continued and that we should reply blow by blow; no, more appropriate tactics should be used in order to stop the repressive activities of the regime...."

[Question] What is the PRS-ERP opinion of the church?

[Answer] "The church has played one of the most important and courageous roles within the forces involved in the conflictual Salvadoran society...the revolution organizations are not indifferent to the role being played by the democratic sectors which are seeking a revolutionary solution to the crisis of the Salvadoran society..the church plays a very important role within this group of broad social forces.... Regarding this, we must note that the rank and file of the Salvadoran church are closely tied with the popular sectors...this is understandable because the religious work is carried out in the communities, neighborhoods, cantons and poor sectors.... The church in El Salvador has an extraordinary social sensitivity and a great political tie with the revolutionary and democratic forces...."

Second Interview of Villalobos

PA111758 Havana PRELA in Spanish 1320 GMT 9 Mar 80 PA

[Report on interview with Joaquin Villalobos, top political and military leader of the Salvadoran Revolutionary People Army and secretary general of the Party of Salvadoran Revolution, conducted by PRELA correspondent Mario Menendez Rodriguez "somewhere in El Salvador"--dated 7 March 1980; quote marks as received]

[Text] The unity of the revolutionary and democratic organizations is urgently needed at this historic moment when there are new prospects for power and the Salvadoran oligarchy and its reactionary forces, in collusion with imperialism, are entering a defensive stage.... This should be the year of unity and the one to mark the beginning of the big decisive battles for the definitive liberation of El Salvador. This was said by Joaquin Villalobos, secretary general of the Party of the Salvadoran Revolution [Partido de la Revolucion Salvadorena--PRS] and top military leader of the Revolutionary Peoples Army (ERP), during an exclusive interview with PRENSA LATINA.

This historic moment, according to the young strategist of a peoples power and organizational policy which is intended to promote the development of the insurrectionary process, includes the phase in which imperialism begins to strategically defend an area vital to its interests to the continent: Central America...it also covers the joint defense of the capitalist system under Central America's oligarchic dominion.... And so the unity of the oligarchies and their [words indistinct] political, ideological and moral advantage over the masses, we would probably not have grown but fallen into

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vacillations.... Therefore, precisely because of that, we think audacity is essential to the revolutionary process and it has not been an exclusive attribute of the PRS-ERP but a continuing characteristic of the other organizations in the Salvadoran revolutionary moment....

Perhaps one of the most audacious steps we have taken to date is the insurrections on 16 October 1979, the day after the fall of Gen Carlos Humberto Romer's administration...some townships, where fighting lasted a long time with the support of the people, were occupied by the military for 12 hours and others a while longer...available materials were scarce but the morale of the masses was extraordinary.... The political and ideological disposition to fight was out of the question...but then, why did we act that way? Because it was a variation on imperialism--as has been demonstrated--to hoodwink the Salvadoran people: If it had been consolidated, it would have meant defeat, transitory, if you will, but a defeat nonetheless of a revolutionary alternative...at that time any defense of the revolutionary alternative had to be daring and determined: In fact whatever risks were necessary had to be taken, starting by the loss of our cadres...the strategic objective was to save the revolutionary project...."

Objectives of the Incumbent's Government Junta

What does the PRS-ERP think of the incumbent's government junta?

"Before giving our opinion on the current Christian Democratic-Military Alliance, it is worth noting the problems which arose during the 2 and 1/2 months of the first government junta. First, how could the internal situation of that regime and its contradictory social makeup be explained? Second, how could the political outlook be explained to the masses so we could adjust our line of action accordingly? If we had first discussed the internal contradictions of the government junta, we would have confused the masses. Why? Because we could not begin by discussing the intentions of the civilian figures who lacked the decisionmaking power to implement change and reform. We had to start with the fundamental element in the junta: the armed forces which were in power and were not willing to accept profound and radical changes because their objectives were counterrevolutionary--to isolate the people from their vanguard and try to destroy the revolutionary political-military organization.... So aside from the good intentions of the people who composed the first government junta, our policy consisted of practicing a line of constant pressure so the military sectors that had real authority would be compelled to defend the scheme planned by imperialism, the oligarchy and their allies....

The militant pressure of the masses and military-type revolutionary action intensified the crisis of the first government junta: the democratic officials resigned and the strategy of the enemy lay uncovered before the people.... Now, the alliance of the military and the Christian Democrats faces many political disadvantages, among them a low level of credibility

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and very few possibilities to find solutions to the problems.... In addition, it is important to stress the following: the present government junta knew the proper direction in which to go and how to do it, that is, there exists homogeneity in its objectives and methods. This is the essential difference between them and the first government junta. In the first junta there was a confrontation between those democrats calling for changes and the end of repression and those who were definitely opposed to this.... Consequently, the military and the Christian Democrats who are currently members of the Salvadoran Government know perfectly well the rules of the game: to offer many changes, make a minimum of concessions and repress the people intensively...the reactionary branch of Christian Democracy headed by Jose Napoleon Duarte knows there is a need to repress and the military knows that this branch agrees with repression in order to stop the revolutionary offensive of the masses...." [quotation mark as received]

[Question] What is the opinion of the PRS-ERP regarding the unity of the revolutionary and democratic forces in El Salvador?

[Answer] "At this time, this is perhaps one of the most fundamental points of the Salvadoran revolutionary process. In order to reply broadly, we could make the following questions: Why is unity necessary? How do we think unity can be achieved at these moments? How should the process of unity be articulated with the broad policy of alliances?...

With regard to the first question, that is, on the need for unity, we consider that the economic, political and social crisis through which Salvadoran society is passing is a solid, fundamental argument...the unity of revolutionary and democratic organizations is an absolute necessity at this historical moment, when an avenue to power is opened and the Salvadoran oligarchy and its reactionary forces, in alliance with imperialism, enter into a defensive stage.... It is the moment that includes the phase in which imperialism enters into a stage of strategic defense of a zone vital to its interests on the continent: Central America...it is also the phase in which the joint defense of the capitalist system under the domination of Central American oligarchy also occurs.... Hence, the unity of the oligarchy and its military instruments for the defense of its wealth...in this sense, to not think of unity as a formidable political-military instrument that would permit the revolutionary and democratic organizations to make maximum use of the potential of its forces at the moment a path to power opens, would mean noncompliance with a fundamental task of the Salvadoran revolution and also of the Latin American revolution.... At this moment, it is not a question of establishing a debate of political positions, when on the basis of concrete reality, everyone acts in unison for the same objective and they are attacked by forces directed by imperialism...which makes no distinction between one political-military revolutionary organization and another... And, how do we think unity can be achieved?... We believe it should be done in ways that will permit its total conversion into unity for strategic ends. In this sense, we do not go along with

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the traditional concept of unity, that is, of organic unity, that is immediately established and suddenly eliminates the different styles, concepts, language and so forth that typify each revolutionary organization.... We conceive unity as a process that goes from permanent and not incidental coordination or coordination to handle the interests of a particular hegemony within the group of revolutionary forces. We are thinking of real, candid, and true coordination that sees the Salvadoran revolution as a fundamental objective--to the organic phases in which we try to construct, with all the revolutionary forces, a most advanced political detachment that will lead the Salvadoran revolution...this is our proposal on how it should be done.

Unity, a unity conceived as a process without a time limit or a [words indistinct]. However, we believe that because of the demands of the Salvadoran revolution, this process should not take a year, it could be a matter of months...we say this because contacts which have been made between the people of the various revolutionary organizations, and contacts which have been made while implementing policies have shown that if coordination is established, these contacts will develop rapidly.

[Question] What problems do we face in the unification process?

[Answer] We had problems at the beginning, especially during the period of the first government junta. These problems were caused by important differences between political lines.

But there are other problems whose solutions demand that the coordination process create methods and procedures which eliminate subjective approaches and resentment which stems from the way in which the ideological struggle developed in the past.

Today there are no political differences among revolutionary organizations, but subjectivism almost demands that there be differences, because we are dealing with different organizations...the struggle must be waged against subjectivism.... Unity must be conceived as a political entity in which all Salvadoran revolutionary forces participate, even those which haven't had a meaningful participation as basic forces. It is fundamental that they do not remain isolated from the bloc of revolutionary forces.

How does the alliance of democratic forces view the concept of unity?... Well, we believe that we must assume a comprehensive attitude toward the participation of democratic forces within a policy in which revolutionary forces will appear before the democratic forces as elements of change, interested in an authentic peoples democracy...the correct application of such a policy would take allies away from imperialism and the oligarchic sectors, allies which are strategic instruments for the possible implementation of a new domination policy.... In this respect we believe that an understanding attitude must prevail allowing the revolutionary forces to obtain the support of democratic forces...if we are to do this we must establish platforms, concepts and broad avenues for understanding....

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The revolutionary forces must not, and cannot, forget that a joint policy must be designed to deal with democratic forces. This policy should serve a double purpose: moralize and activate the popular masses, and inspire confidence and turn the revolutionary left into another alternative for the democratic forces."

[Question] Several of the members of the first government junta who resigned have been criminally attacked. What do the Salvadoran Revolutionary Party [PRS] and the Revolutionary Peoples Army [ERP] think about this?

[Answer] When these attacks occurred, we immediately issued a communique condemning them so that honest and aware democratic forces could realize that they have a main enemy and that we do not consider as enemies those people who honestly tried to implement a system of changes when they were members of the first government junta.... Furthermore, the revolutionary forces have implemented a policy to reply to repressive tactics or killings by the reactionary right. Criminal attacks against members of democratic forces will not go unpunished...these attacks, also have a political purpose: to weaken the possibilities for a union between democratic and revolutionary sectors." A weapon to punish the oligarchy.

[Question] What is the PRS-ERP opinion about kidnapping?

[Answer] We consider these operations as acts of revolutionary justice. Repression is hard to describe in El Salvador, which has long had a poor and unhealthy society. Savage and brutal acts are committed against a population which lacks the most indispensable things. Thus, an operation in which the revolutionary forces capture for the purpose of justice, a member of one of the families which control economic and political power by exploiting the people, is turned into a political event to reveal the injustice and polarization of classes prevailing in the country. However, despite the great differences between us and the great responsibility they must bear, they are treated with respect. Even in the conditions of seclusion in which they are kept, they are provided all possible necessities, while the government or their families meet the demands and conditions of the revolutionary organizations.

While in captivity, our policy regarding the extremely reactionary, insolent and arrogant attitudes of our captives, who are used to an opulent way of life, consists in showing them a humane attitude. Our strategy is to make them realize the reason behind the struggle of our revolutionaries. By doing this, they can see the great difference between the way we treat our captives and how the repressive forces serving the oligarchy treat its prisoners. When the Salvadoran press, which belongs to the oligarchy or its associates, writes about kidnappings giving it a big political importance it only refers to the ones carried out by our revolutionary organizations. It never mentions when a labor leader is kidnapped. For them this does not have any political importance, nor does the way they are treated

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in clandestine prisons or in security forces headquarters. The kidnaping of labor leaders are important political incidents because it is part of the people's struggle. The mistreatment of hundreds of political prisoners is a political issue which has had an impact on the conscience of our people. When we capture a member of the oligarchy, it is our policy to have him read the book "The Clandestine Jails in El Salvador" written by Companera Ana Guadalupe Martinez. In it she describes the conditions prevailing in those jails and the treatment given to political prisoners including: torture, abuses, complete solitary without clothes or food and nothing to sleep on, and the inhumane conditions in which the only motivation to stay alive is the revolutionary spirit. Very little is known about these conditions because we do not have the means to denounce it. That is why kidnaping is a fundamental strategy to punish the oligarchy. Let the oligarchy pay for the hardships and tasks of the Salvadoran revolution with the money stolen from the people.

[Question] What have been PRS-ERP casualties in the last 9 years?

[Answer] The numbers of those sacrificed to make possible the organization and its participation in the people's revolutionary struggle has been high. If we should add the militias and cadres which have participated in the defense of the people and in guerrilla activities, our casualties are over a 100. Among these casualties there were some very important people. Rafael Antonio Arce Zablah was one of them. The central front was named after him.

The eastern front carries the name of Juan Jose Gomez. The western front is named after Edgar Salmeron. Each of these companeros expresses various degrees of the organization's political development and various ways of contributing to and carrying out the main goals of the organization's development period. There are other casualties, almost as important, like Companero Denis, who fell during the military occupation of San Marcos on 17 October 1979; Companera Irma Elena Contrara, head of the self-defense people's militia, who died in the 29 October massacre in San Salvador; and Rodolfo Munguia, who died recently in La Union. He was one of our most important political cadres in the eastern zone. These, perhaps, have been our most important casualties. There are others. Those we have mentioned, however, represent different historical moments of our organization and of its beginnings in the revolutionary process.

[Question] What is and what has been the role of women in PRS-ERP?

[Answer] Since the birth of our organization, women have had a very meaningful participation...about 30 percent of the Central Committee is made up of women, and a woman is part of the PRS political commission.... In the cells, the participation of women as a political and military units is remarkable...however, this participation is not the result of a line established by the party's directorate, but a reflection of the entire political process and its links with the Salvadoran masses.... Women are

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present in political activities of all kinds and in the struggles of the people...not only women, but entire families participate...the participation of the family as a unit is a very important experience, especially in rural sectors...in the Salvadoran rural sectors women are a strategic entity, an irreplaceable pillar. No differences are made regarding the type of tasks assigned.

In spite of the newsman's insistence, Joaquin Villalobos did not cover his face when photographs were taken to record the historic moment....

[Question] How does the PRS-ERP interpret the concept of underground?

[Answer] "...when we emerged as an organization, the enemy was almost at our doorstep...the underground, therefore, was essential; right down to the slightest detail it was the only way our members could survive...when we refer to members, we don't mean only the PRS-ERP, but all the other groups of revolutionary organizations which have helped, in one way or another, to create what is today a process in which we establish norms for a policy of power.... The underground concept today begins to have a different meaning. It is more daring and political, it is not only a technical method, it begins to be something in which the masses begin to play a more important role of large-scale offensives...if we were to continue insisting on a too technical concept of the underground we could even isolate the masses from their military instruments and isolate the masses from the instruments which help to wage the battle in the political and military levels. This can be noticed in El Salvador in the implementation of the armed defense of the masses in the peoples political fronts...in this case the underground acquires other characteristics because we have legitimized the process of self-defense before a ruthless enemy which compels us to take these steps and give validity to these types of organizations...this is why we believe that it is essential to break away from being an underground movement in order to show the masses that their methods for the armed struggle are also the methods to establish power policies which are real and that at a certain moment must be specific with names, people and structures...."

[Question] What are the PRS-ERP politics in the international field?

[Answer] "To speak of our attitude in the international field is to talk about the struggle against U.S. imperialism, which we consider the fundamental enemy of all revolutionary peoples and governments.... In this respect we give great importance to the contributions made during this historical period by the peoples of Indochina, especially the Vietnamese who obtained the greatest victory by placing imperialism in a position of weakness.... In spite of the geographic distance and the natural differences of our two peoples, the fact of having a common enemy, weakened and defeated by the Vietnamese people, made possible the victory of the Nicaraguan people and will make possible the victory of the Salvadoran revolution and of Central America.... We believe that the Latin American revolutionary forces, in

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general, and in Central America specifically, with a very special place for the Cuban revolution, are fundamental and strategic allies of the Salvadoran revolution.... When we identify ourselves as enemies of U.S. imperialism, we also identify ourselves with the cause of the nonaligned countries, with the struggle of the Palestine people and the African movements for popular liberation..in brief, we identify ourselves with the cause of all exploited and oppressed peoples....

[Question] What will El Salvador's future be?

[Answer] "This may be the year of unity which will mark the beginning of the great battles for the final liberation."

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